

Book Reviews

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CANCER MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY STATISTICS: Japan and the World—Japanese Cancer Association GANN Monograph on Cancer Research No. 26. Edited by Mitsuo Segi, Suketami Tominaga, Kunio Aoki and Isaburo Fujimoto. ISBS, Inc., P.O. Box 1632, Beaverton, OR 97075, 1981. 274 pages, \$45.00.

This is a useful compendium of cancer statistics for cancer epidemiologists and others needing cancer incidence statistics for Japan, and cancer mortality data for many countries throughout the world. Included are three papers, each with a brief discussion followed by tables or figures providing incidence or mortality data. The editors of the monograph and the authors of the papers are well-known for earlier work in this field. In particular, Professor Mitsuo Segi's graphic representations of site-specific, age-adjusted cancer death rates for international comparisons have become classics and are widely used.

The three papers in the monograph are titled "Cancer Mortality in Japan," "Cancer Incidence in Japan," and "World Cancer Mortality," respectively.

"Cancer Mortality in Japan"

The report on cancer mortality in Japan provides the following:

- The number of deaths from malignant neoplasms by site and sex and the corresponding proportionate cancer mortality (1978).
- The number of anatomical site- or system-specific cancer deaths by sex with crude and age-adjusted death rates (1935-1978).
- Age- and sex-specific cancer mortality rates at five-year intervals from 1950 to 1975 plus 1978. Time trends in age-specific death rates are plotted by calendar year and by age for birth-year cohorts. This is provided for each sex by anatomic site or system.
- Age-adjusted death rates for cancer by site and sex are given for four groupings of cities and counties in Japan in 1970 and 1975.
- Tables and figures showing standardized mortality ratios for all cancers and for specific sites and systems by prefecture of Japan for the five-year period 1973-1977.

"Cancer Incidence in Japan"

The paper on cancer incidence in Japan provides data on crude and age-adjusted annual cancer incidence rates by site and sex for each of 15 population-based cancer registries in Japan and for all registries combined. These registries provide coverage of 43 percent (47.5 million) of the population of Japan. This is supplemented by annual crude and age-adjusted cancer incidence rates by sex and cancer site for each registry (1974-1976). Estimates are also made of cancer incidence rates for the whole of Japan by projecting rates from seven of the most reliable population-based registries and with adjustment for potential underestimation or overestimation. The adjustment index was obtained from a comparison of cancer death rates from the test registry areas with that recorded for the whole of

Japan. The reliability of the methodology employed in estimating national incidence figures needs further assessment.

This chapter closes with a tabulation of crude and age-adjusted annual incidence rates by sex and cancer site for the Osaka Prefecture based on the average experience over the period 1967-1976. Also provided for Osaka is a table showing the time trend in age-adjusted cancer incidence rates over the period 1963-1977.

"World Cancer Mortality"

This final paper provides cancer mortality statistics for 56 countries throughout the world. This represents an extension of the previously published material for which Professor Segi has gained renown in the past. Included are age-adjusted cancer death rates by site for the period 1950-1975; age-adjusted cancer death rates by sex and site for 1975 presented in familiar bar graph form to facilitate visual comparison among the countries for which data were available; and age-sex-specific cancer death rates by site by country for 1974, 1975 or 1976. Also given are cumulative cancer death rates by sex for certain sites in selected countries for the age interval 0 to 74 years in 1954-1955 and 1974. Other information on population counts, infant mortality and proportionate mortality from cancer is provided in the final tables of the paper.

This volume provides much information to epidemiologists or clinicians wishing to assess the magnitude of the cancer problem either in Japan or in the international community of nations. Parts of the English translation of the Japanese original are difficult to understand. Also, some of the methodology is presented in too limited a way. Only the most cursory summary of some noteworthy observations is presented in most instances. Nevertheless, this volume is one of value and should represent a fitting testimonial to the labors of Professor Segi, word of whose death was received just as this review was begun.

It should be noted that several parallels exist between the data in this monograph and those in two recent American publications. The maps on cancer mortality in Japan are similar, on a reduced scale, to the contents of the *Atlas of Cancer Mortality for US Counties, 1950-1969* (DHEW Publication No. [NIH] 75-780). This latter volume helped identify "hot spots" for various forms of cancer in the United States. The availability of cancer incidence data for areas of Japan that maintain population-based registries is most timely, since it coincides closely with the publication in 1981 of *National Cancer Institute (NCI) Monograph 57* which provides incidence, as well as mortality data, for 1973-1977 collected by the NCI's SEER (surveillance, epidemiology and end results) program in ten parts of the United States and Puerto Rico. It is hoped that useful comparisons between the Japanese and American experience will be forthcoming.

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